

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9054

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USEC BRUSSELS

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3441

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ETRN, UK, SP

SUBJECT: GIBRALTAR: NEW UK-SPANISH TALKS END

REF A. MADRID 2208 B. MADRID 1506 C. LONDON 1970

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: LATEST UK-SPANISH BILATERAL TALKS ON GIBRALTAR IN MADRID MAY 30-31, ENDED WITHOUT ANY PROGRESS. GOS WAS ADAMANT IN REFUSING TO ACCEDE TO UK REQUEST FOR SPANISH APPROVAL FOR ENTRY OF BRITISH AIRCRAFT IN SPANISH AIRSPACE IN ORDER TO TAKE OFF AND LAND AT GIBRALTAR'S AIRPORT IN EXCHANGE FOR UK SUPPORT OF SPAIN'S ENTRY IN EUROCONTROL. GOS INSISTED ON FULL DECOLONIALIZATION AND REFUSED TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO PARTIAL ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

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2. UK FCO UNDERSECRETARY SIR JOHN KILLICK AND DIRECTOR

OF SOUTHERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS GOODISON, VISITED MADRID MAY 30-31 AND HELD INFORMAL TALKS IN MFA ON GIBRALTAR. SPANISH MFA UNDERSECRETARY ROVIRA TOLD PRESS MAY 31 THAT CONVERSATIONS WERE HELD IN RESPONSE TO UK AMBASSADOR'S REQUEST APR 11 (SPANISH PRESS ALSO REPORTS THAT FCO INFORMED BRITISH PRESS PRIOR TO VISIT THAT FCO OFFICIALS WERE RESPONDING TO SPANISH INVITATION). ROVIRA SAID THAT TALKS WERE HELD ON "AD REFERENDUM BASIS" IN COMPLIANCE WITH RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY UN IN DEC 1973.

3. ROVIRA SAID THAT ONLY ISSUE DISCUSSED WAS UK PREOCCUPATION WITH SECURITY OF LANDINGS AND TAKEOFFS FROM ITS AIRPORT AT GIBRALTAR. THERE HAD BEEN FREQUENT VIOLATIONS OF SPANISH AIRSPACE BY UK AIRCRAFT WHICH NEEDED LARGE MANEUVER SPACE IN ORDER USE LIMITED RUNWAY AT GIBRALTAR. ROVIRA TOLD PRESS THAT WHENEVER BRITISH ENTERED SPANISH AIRSPACE, GOS PROTESTED DIPLOMATICALLY AND ASSESSED FINES. AGAINST BACKDROP OF USE OF AIRCRAFT REQUIRING LARGER MANEUVERING SPACE, ROVIRA SAID BRITISH INSISTENT ON SERIOUSNESS OF ISSUE. BRITISH REQUESTED GOS ACQUIESCENCE IN PROCEDURE WHEREBY UK AIRCRAFT WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY ALLOWED TO ENTER RESTRICTED AIRSPACE AREA OF ALGECIRAS PROVIDING THAT THEY CONTACTED SEVILLE AIR CONTROL IN ADVANCE.

4. ROVIRA SAID GOS COULD NOT ACCEDE TO UK REQUEST. GOS WAS NOT PREPARED TO STUDY ISOLATED ISSUES WHICH WOULD NOT LEAD DIRECTLY TO "DECOLONIALIZATION" OF GIBRALTAR. SPAIN COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO GIVE IMPLICIT SPANISH RECOGNITION TO UK USE OF AIRFIELD LOCATED ON PENINSULA OUTSIDE OF TERRITORY CEDED UNDER TREATY OF UTRECHT. ROVIRA SAID SPAIN WOULD NOT TAKE ANY STEP WHICH WOULD BE INCONSISTENT WITH ITS POLICY OF ENDING "COLONIALIZATION" OF GIBRALTAR. THIS WAS ALL THE MORE TIMELY AT PRESENT AGAINST A BACKDROP OF "DECOLONIALIZATION" THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. ROVIRA SAID THAT SPAIN WOULD INFORM UN SECRETARY GENERAL OF THESE TALKS.

5. ASKED BY PRESS ABOUT UK VETO AGAINST SPANISH ENTRY INTO EUROCONTROL, ROVIRA SAID THAT THIS HAD NOT BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCUSSED. HE ALSO DENIED THAT THE BRITISH HAD OFFERED ACCESS TO GIBRALTAR AIRPORT TO SPANISH IN EXCHANGE FOR SPANISH APPROVAL TO ENTER SPANISH AIRSPACE. (THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT BRITISH WERE PREPARED TO SUGGEST JOINT USE OF THE GIBRALTAR AIRPORT. GOS WOULD PRESUMABLY FIND THIS SOLUTION OBJECTIONABLE INASMUCH AS IT WOULD ALSO IMPLY IMPLICIT SPANISH APPROVAL OF UK CONTROL OF WHAT HAS HERETOFORE BEEN CONSIDERED SPANISH TERRITORY.)

6. SPANISH CABINET DISCUSSED MAY 31 PROPOSALS FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW MAJOR AIRPORT AT CASTELLAR DE LA FRONTERA APPROXIMATELY 15 KILOMETERS FROM GIBRALTAR. NO DEFINITIVE DECISION WAS REACHED. THIS PROJECT WAS FIRST DISCUSSED IN CABINET OCT 11, 1973. SUBSEQUENTLY THE AIR MINISTER VISITED THE AREA AND CONFIRMED THAT AN AIRPORT WOULD BE CONSTRUCTED WITH A CAPACITY TO HANDLE ALL MODERN AIRCRAFT. IT WOULD PROVIDE FACILITIES FOR CHANNELING TOURISM DESTINED FOR COSTA DEL SOL, ALGECIRAS AND NORTH AFRICA, AS WELL AS SPAIN'S ATLANTIC COAST.

7. OFFICIAL IN SPANISH PRESIDENCY TOLD EMBOFF JUNE 3 THAT SPANISH EMBASSY IN LONDON HAD ADVISED MFA NOT TO ACCEDE TO UK PROPOSAL FOR TALKS AT THIS TIME. EMBASSY ESTIMATED THAT UK OFFICIALS WOULD NOT BE PREPARED TO PRESENT ANY REAL SERIOUS PROPOSALS. SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO LONDON, FRAGA IRIBARNE, WAS IN MADRID THE WEEKEND BEFORE ARRIVAL OF UK OFFICIALS.

8. OFFICIAL IN PRESIDENCY SAID THAT UK OFFICIALS OFFERED GOS TO SUPPORT SPANISH ENTRY INTO EUROCONTROL IN EXCHANGE FOR GOS FLEXIBILITY ON ISSUE OF FLIGHT PATTERN CONTROL IN AREA OF GIBRALTAR AND ALGECIRAS. MFA TURNED DOWN THIS PROPOSAL BECAUSE IT OBJECTED TO SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO ISOLATED ASPECTS OF GIBRALTAR QUESTION AND ALSO BECAUSE GOS NOW BELIEVED THAT IT HAD ALTERNATIVE WITH US WITH RESPECT TO AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL EQUIPMENT (REF B). SAME OFFICIAL SAID THAT GOS HAD GATHERED THAT UK WAS "REALLY HURTING" WITH RESPECT TO USE OF GIBRALTAR AIRPORT BY NEW AIRCRAFT.

9. COMMENT: CONSTRUCTION OF A MAJOR AIRPORT NEAR GIBRALTAR
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WOULD INTRODUCE NEW COMPLICATING FACTOR INTO SITUATION. IT MAY MERELY BE A SPANISH MANEUVER TO PRESS BRITISH INTO RELINQUISHING AIRPORT ALTOGETHER AS AN INITIAL STEP TOWARDS DECOLONIZATION. EMBASSY WAS TOLD IN MARCH FOR EXAMPLE, THAT GOS HAD OFFERED UK IN NOV 1973, TO LIFT AIR RESTRICTIONS IN AREA IN EXCHANGE FOR PUTTING GIBRALTAR AIRPORT UNDER SPANISH CONTROL BUT ALLOWING CONTINUED BRITISH USE OF FACILITY (REF B). AT THAT TIME UK REJECTED GOS OFFER, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCES.

10. GOS HAS APPARENTLY ADOPTED AN "ALL OR NOTHING" APPROACH TO RESOLUTION OF GIBRALTAR QUESTION. BESIDES MAINTAINING ITS LAND BLOCKADE OF GIBRALTAR IN EFFECT SINCE 1969, GOS HAS TAKEN STEPS IN PAST SEVERAL YEARS TO BUILD UP ECONOMIC ATTRACTIVENESS OF ALGECIRAS AREA,

PRESUMABLY AS MEANS OF BREAKING DOWN ALLEGED DIFFERENCE
IN STANDARD OF LIVING BETWEEN RESIDENTS OF GIBRALTAR
AND NEIGHBORING AREA. ACCORDING TO EDITORIAL IN
"INFORMACIONES" (INDEPENDENT) MAY 31, GOS HAS FOLLOWED
INTRANSIGENT POSTURE FIRST ADOPTED BY FONMIN CASTIELLA.
NEW FONMIN CORTINA PREVIOUSLY SERVED AS CASTIELLA'S
UNDERSECRETARY.
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